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III. HIGH RANGING BUT RATHER LOW NESTING

	Nesting height	Wing minus tail mm.
Great Crested Flycatcher	Generally less than 20 ft.	10.9

THRUSHES NESTING ABOVE GROUND

		mm.
Wood Thrush	About 8 ft.	37.5
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Low trees or bushes	31.0
Olive-backed Thrush	About 4 ft.	30.8
	Average	33.1

THRUSHES NESTING ON GROUND

Hermit Thrush	24.2
Wilson Thrush	27.9
	Average
	26.0

Other birds ranging and nesting high are the Tanagers, Cedar Waxwing, Kinglets, Robin (at times), Bluebird, Crows, and Grackles. These are all long and pointed of wing. Apparently the only short and round winged bird in eastern North America to nest high is the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, ten to sixty feet; this is the only exception to the law.

All our passerine birds that fly at any considerable elevation above the ground have the long, pointed wing, as Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Cowbirds, Rusty Blackbird, Longspurs, Shore Larks, Titlarks, Robin, Kingbirds, Bluebirds, European Starling, Crows, Ravens and, of course, the Swallows. Even such as fly in flocks in the open above the trees are of the same wing form, as Goldfinches, Siskins, Redpolls, Crossbills, Purple Finches, Cedar Waxwing.

To sum up: Birds with long pointed wings may nest high or low, but the short and round winged are low nesting. In short, among groups of similar passerine North American birds the power of flight is closely related to the elevation of the nest in species that are arboreal.

Bridgeport, Connecticut, January 8, 1922.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Red-wings of the Imperial Valley, California.—During the comparatively few years since agricultural development in the Imperial Valley of California has been in progress, many species of birds have extended their ranges to include this favored area, some have multiplied apace, and not a few of them are, to some extent, changing their habits to conform to new conditions. Chief among these in numbers is probably the Sonora Red-wing (*Agelaius phoeniceus sonoriensis*). Coming in from the valley of the Colorado River, where they were practically limited to the riparian association, the blackbirds have spread over the broad and fertile plain of the Imperial and, fattening unmolested on the grain crops, have become amazingly abundant. There seems to have been little competition in their ecological position, and, with few apparent enemies, their untold thousands have already become such a serious menace that it is being loudly and insistently demanded that some steps be taken to control their depredations.

Red-wings seem to be rather evenly distributed over the valley floor during the

breeding season, as might be expected; for then their diet consists largely of insects, and a given territory will support only a definite number of families. During September and October it is discovered that there has occurred a shifting of the population, and at that time they are not at all common about my ranch near Calexico but are reported as then fairly swarming at the northern end of the valley, where the greatest damage is done to the maturing crop of kaffir corn and milo. The reason for this seasonal shifting is obscure, as those crops are raised to an equal extent at the southern end of the valley, but a significant fact is that a vast area between the irrigated land and the Salton Sea is covered with a wilderness of tules, in which the birds may roost, while at the southern end the tules seem to be limited to a narrow strip along the river.

At about the time that the last of the kaffir corn is being harvested, the red-wings reappear in the vicinity of Calexico in large numbers. There are then no great fields of standing grain in which several thousand birds may sink without a trace; the bulk of the crop has been sacked for export, and what is needed for winter feeding is left "in the head" and placed in piles handy to the feed lot. Obviously, no farmer will view with equanimity the descent upon his corn pile of a couple of thousand red-wings, and law or no law, he will get down his shotgun. Whether from this likely cause or a more obscure one, the birds disperse after the harvest is over and congregate in small flocks, each numbering a few dozen individuals, in the neighborhood of the feed lots, where, with the cowbirds and towhees, they partake of a hearty meal of corn morning and evening, but spend the greater portion of the day about other business.

Whether the red-wings roost to any extent in the river tules near my ranch I am unable to state; but certain it is that they did not do so in the rank patch of this growth, fifty feet square, that formerly filled my horse pond. Rather did they repair for the night with a flock of feral guinea fowl to the protection of a large cottonwood, and during the short time in winter when this is totally without leaves, probably to a row of eucalyptus trees some distance away. During the hottest part of the day, they are in the habit of gathering in an exceedingly garrulous assemblage in the top of a cottonwood or other shady tree; or, as often, I have seen a flock of several hundred taking their siestas strung along the ground beneath the arrow-weed growing on a big ditch bank.

At the Colorado River, in January of 1913, I examined many old red-wing nests situated in tules, which latter, as far as I observed, were always growing in little sloughs that were partly shaded by willows, and hence the nests were protected from the full force of the spring sun during at least a part of the day. I know of no such associational conditions in the Imperial Valley, and the tules along the New River are unshaded. Although these grow in a particularly dense tangle, certain it is that the red-wings do not nest in this situation near my ranch. As the birds were particularly common, I was at a loss to discover just where they do nest, until May 6, when A. van Rossem noted several carrying nesting material into a cottonwood fully sixty feet above the ground; and we subsequently found that a considerable number had taken up their abode in this lone tree. The inference is that if the birds had at any time begun to nest in their usual tule location, they were speedily forced to change their abodes; for I am firmly convinced that unless they nested close to the ground, where they would be subject to the depredations of foraging raccoons and skunks, the intense fervor of the Imperial sun would be too much for them. Hence, the logical alternative would be the cooler protection of the cottonwood.

On the economic status of the red-wings of this district I am unqualified to speak. Their food must be secured with unusually slight effort, for in a large proportion of individuals, the culmen is found to project considerably beyond the gonys, sometimes to a marked extent, and this condition is caused by the lack of the wear and tear usually encountered in gaining a livelihood. It cannot be gainsaid that these birds do an enormous amount of damage at certain seasons in certain districts, and that controlling measures will probably have to be adopted. But a word should be said in their defense. The yellow alfalfa butterfly is a serious pest, and I strongly suspect that when a flock of a hundred of the black fellows wheels over a field and settles into the waving alfalfa, the birds are seeking the festive caterpillar.—A. BRAZIER HOWELL, *Pasadena, California, December 1, 1921.*

Slight Extension of the Breeding Range of the Western Lark Sparrow.—As Lark Sparrows (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*) are supposed to occupy the desert regions only in winter (Pacific Coast Avifauna no. 11, p. 116), it may be worth while to note that the species is a common breeder on the Mohave Desert, from Palmdale to at least twenty miles east of that point. Over this region, which lies along the desert base of the San Gabriel Range, their occurrence is general and not confined, as one might expect, to cultivated areas. While perhaps slightly more common in the pear and other deciduous orchards, they are nevertheless distributed over the unsettled country as well. Many pairs were seen daily from May 3 to May 14, 1920, and were equally common in the same locality during late April and early May of the present year. One nest containing five apparently fresh eggs was found May 5, 1920. It was built on the ground under a small dense bush in the yucca-juniper association at considerable distance from the nearest tilled land.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, December 5, 1921.*

Albino Robin Returning to Former Nesting Site.—The following note is offered as a modest contribution to the mass of published data in support of the theory that birds return to a particular nesting site. A male robin showing patches of white on the wings and predominantly white on the under parts returned for three consecutive years to a garden in Summerland, British Columbia, where, each year, he acquired a mate and helped raise the ensuing family. His piebald appearance made him an object of suspicion to his brethren of conventional garb, and the garden witnessed frequent battles, from which he usually emerged victorious. He was known in the neighborhood as "Blewitt's white robin", and his non-appearance on the fourth year caused general regret in the little community. But four years would appear to be a relatively long span of life for a conspicuous albino.—J. A. MUNRO, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, November 26, 1921.*

Vermilion Flycatcher and Red Phalarope at Long Beach, California.—I wish to report the Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus mexicanus*) from the vicinity of Long Beach. I first saw the bird (a male) on November 20, and I saw it again on December 14. Some friends saw it December 11 and again December 17. Evidently just the one bird has taken up its abode there for the winter. Every time observed it has been within a radius of one-fourth mile. The habitat chosen is a slough with a few scattering willows and a few tules. For the most part the bird was observed perched on the top branches of willows but occasionally upon a fence post or tule. It displayed the usual flycatcher mannerisms by flying out, snapping up an insect, and then returning to the place from which it came.

There was an unusual migration of Red Phalaropes (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) this past fall. I saw about three hundred within an hour on the ponds of the Long Beach Salt Works. This was October 30. There was a great mortality among them this year. Dead birds were brought to the schools picked up by children in the streets or elsewhere. On the ponds mentioned above, dead birds were washed up in windrows. I could count nineteen from one position and twenty-one from another. I counted seventy-five within half an hour. The birds had no shot holes in them, and showed no external evidences of having flown against wires, but all the birds examined were emaciated in the extreme.—L. W. WELCH, *Long Beach, California, December 24, 1921.*

Sonoma Thrasher in Humboldt County, California.—While I was camping last October (1921) in company with Mr. Chester C. Lamb, near what is down on the current maps as "Thorn", a few miles north of the southern boundary of Humboldt County, it was a matter of surprise to us to hear the notes of thrashers among the thick growth of white thorn (*Ceanothus incanus*) surrounding our camp. This was situated only six or seven miles from the ocean shore, about east of the landing called Shelter Cove, and somewhat protected from ocean winds by a range of hills. These birds were very shy but we succeeded in securing three specimens on October 5 and 6, only one of which, however, had completely assumed the new fall plumage. These specimens appear to

be inseparable from *Toxostoma redivivum sonomae*. This is a more northern coast record than has so far been published, according to my recollection.

Another specimen of this species was secured near Cummings P. O., Mendocino County (California), and more were heard, but this locality is farther south and much more inland than Thorn, but not much farther north than Covelo, from which a record has been published.—JOSEPH MAILLARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, January 12, 1922.*

Breeding of the San Diego Titmouse on the Mohave Desert.—April 12 of the present year, the junior writer collected a pair of San Diego Titmouses (*Baeolophus inornatus murinus*), five miles east of Palmdale, in the yucca-juniper association. The female had apparently laid but a short time previously, and there was undoubtedly a nest near at hand. Another pair was heard (but not taken) a few hundred yards away. These two birds are most like *murinus*, but are not typical of that form. They are grayer dorsally, and the wing of the male measures longer than that of any coast slope bird we have. These differences possibly indicate a tendency toward *griseus*.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, December 5, 1921.*

A December Record for the Sage Thrasher in Colorado.—On December 8, 1921, we collected a female *Oreoscoptes montanus* on the College campus at Fort Collins. The bird was in good flesh, and its stomach contained two small pebbles and remains of twenty-one flies (*Anocompta latiuscula*).—W. L. BURNETT, *Colorado State Agricultural College, Fort Collins, January 1, 1922.*

The Bathing of Hummingbirds.—From the scarcity of published references to the bathing of hummingbirds, one is led to believe that these birds are not generally aware of the benefits to be derived from an occasional bath. I have seen hummingbirds bathe so many times that I have considered it a rather commonplace occurrence, though none the less interesting, and while reading a recent paper by John Burroughs (Harper's Magazine, May, 1921, p. 789), I was somewhat startled by the statement that "This morning I saw a hummingbird taking its bath in the big dewdrops on a small ash tree. I have seen other birds bathe in the dew or raindrops on tree foliage, but did not before know that the hummer bathed at all." This refers of course to the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) and it may be that that bird seldom bathes, else so careful and experienced an observer would have seen it long ago. Mr. H. W. Bates in "A Naturalist on the Amazon" described hummingbirds as bathing by dipping into a pool of water while on the wing. This also probably refers to birds unknown in California.

During the past five or six years, I have, several times each spring, visited a little glen in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, in which at one place the water flows about a quarter of an inch deep over the flat surface of a rock. This rock has been appropriated by the Allen Hummingbirds (*Selasphorus alleni*) for a bathing place. The place at times was fairly swarming with the birds and the constant hum might lead one to believe that a nest of huge bumble bees had been disturbed. Suddenly with a buzz a bird would appear, hover over the rock for an instant, and then sprawl headlong into the water, stretching the wings and neck and lying prone on the rock, squirming the body and fluttering the wings until seemingly it became quite "water-logged". Then, just as suddenly, it would dart to a perch overhead, leaving a streak of mist in its wake like the tail of a miniature comet. Here it would preen its plumage. The surface of the rock was not over a foot across and I noted as many as four birds bathing simultaneously. Occasionally, after preening, one would return for a second dip.

Again on August 18, 1921, in Alameda, the Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) treated me to a rare performance somewhat similar to that mentioned by Mr. Burroughs. I had been sprinkling the garden when a male bird came to the rose bushes and literally sprawled on the wet foliage. For several minutes he crawled among the leaves, wiping the sides of his head, spreading the wings and tail, and mopping up as much water as possible, appearing ridiculously like a tiny parrot climbing about its cage. Following this he flew to a clothes line and preened his plumage. The garden sprink-

ler was turned on but he did not fly through the spray as I have heard hummingbirds will do.

That hummingbirds bathe, and quite thoroughly, then, is certain, despite the scarcity of references. No doubt they enjoy the bath as well as other birds, but the ease with which they penetrate thickets and cover distances has enabled them to escape observation.—FRANK N. BASSETT, *Alameda, California, January 21, 1922.*

Notes on Some Water-fowl.—Regarding the nesting of the Canvasback (*Marila valisineria*), I have on two occasions caught young ones, nearly full-grown, in New Mexico, where I believe they nest in considerable numbers in the mountain lakes. Half a dozen pairs used to breed every year on a prairie pond on the C. S. Ranch, the property of Mr. Charles Springer, near Cimarron, Colfax County, New Mexico. I found them there last in 1915. In California, the southward migration of Canvasbacks leaves the coast at about the latitude of San Luis Obispo, and from that point follows the mountain lakes south. Many of them winter in the lakes of the San Pedro Martir Mountains, Lower California, but one never sees them on either coast of the Peninsula. The records of a club like the Bolsa Chica show how rare the "Cans" are along the southern coast of California, and yet on the grounds of the San Timoteo Gun Club, near Banning, Riverside County, one used to bag two Cans for one of every other kind of bird!

I once handled two fine specimens of the Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) that were shot by a friend on a reservoir near Redlands in 1903. They were members of a flock of about a dozen, and I remember my surprise at seeing this strictly maritime species so far from the sea. I question whether the numbers of these birds have been so greatly diminished by shooting. They still winter in vast numbers on San Quentin Bay, Lower California, where the few gunners who have sought them have had no difficulty in making disgracefully huge bags. Perhaps the brant have learned to avoid our coast entirely, and pass by each year, in scarcely diminished numbers, to winter on the Mexican bays, where the report of a shotgun is seldom or never heard.

I believe that changing conditions, brought about by the deplorable influx of settlers into California, lead one to think that the fowl have decreased more than is perhaps the case—though Heaven knows the decrease is pitiful enough. In 1919, when I spent a few months at home, I found that dozens of ponds and lakes formerly alive with waterfowl, were deserted. Were the birds nearly all dead, or had they changed their wintering places? The geese are gone, like the cranes which, less than twenty years ago, used to pass in thousands over Riverside and San Bernardino counties, migrating northward from the Colorado delta. But concerning the ducks, I am not so sure. There are at present in California two great wintering regions for countless myriads of wild duck: the Sacramento Valley about Colusa, and the Imperial Valley in the south. The number of fowl concentrated in these two regions is staggering to the imagination. Only two years ago I sat in a blind near Gridley and forgot to use my gun while I watched tens of thousands of sprig trailing like films of lace across the sky. I believe that in an hour not less than a quarter of a million birds passed southward. The rice plantations of this region account, in part at least, for the desertion of other parts of the valley; the great irrigated areas of Imperial, with the tule swamps where the New River runs into the Salton Sea, seem to me to account for much of the desertion of once populous waters in southern California. A generation ago ducks were almost unknown in the Imperial district. If Imperial were suddenly to go dry, and all the birds wintering there to scatter out, as formerly, over the lakes and marshes of southern California, the prospect might look less depressing.

The fresh water marshes of Lake Chapala, in the state of Jalisco, Mexico, form another haven for waterfowl. At one end of the lake there is a great area of flooded land cut by a veritable labyrinth of sluggish channels, 400 square miles, I should say. The far interior of this swampy paradise, reached after three days' travel in a native canoe, is a vast sanctuary for wildfowl, a region of gently-rolling damp prairies, set with small ponds, and traversed by a network of navigable channels leading to the great lake. I saw as many geese, White-fronted (*Anser albifrons*) and Snow (*Chen hyperboreus*), as I have ever seen in the Sacramento Valley, and the number of ducks was past belief, with some interesting species, like the Masked and Florida Black or Dusky, to

lend variety. A more thorough investigation of this field would be worth while, for I have reason to believe that several species of northern ducks breed there, and breed at a much later season than in our country. On November 20 (1909) I found a brood of young Shovellers (*Spatula clypeata*) unable to fly, and the natives told me that hundreds of ducks nested there, among them Gadwall, Dusky, Sprig, Shoveller, and Cinnamon Teal.

The South Pacific, where I am living now, is a poor place from the point of view of a lover of the Anatidae. We have only one duck in the islands south of the Line (though I know a man who claims that Shovellers come to Penrhyn Island every year about Thanksgiving time, and remain for two or three months), called *Anas superciliosa*, and reminding one of a small dull-colored Gadwall. Three migrating waders reach Tahiti every year from the north: The Pacific Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus fulvus*), the Wandering Tattler (*Heteractitis incanus*), and the Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*).—C. B. NORDHOFF, *Papeete, Tahiti, Society Islands, November 22, 1921.*

Second Occurrence of the Yakutat Song Sparrow in California.—On September 19, 1915, Mr. Laurence M. Huey took a specimen of *Melospiza melodia caurina* Ridgway, at Fortuna, Humboldt County, California. The bird is a female (no. C 281, coll. Donald R. Dickey), and becomes, I believe, the second recorded instance of the capture within the state of this rare winter visitant to the northwest coast of California.

The bird was taken on a brushy hillside in the immediate vicinity of Fortuna, and at a distance, therefore, of several miles from the sea. In this connection, it is interesting to note the wide departure from normal in the associational behavior exhibited during migration by this individual. In its breeding range and on its winter ground the bird is essentially a "beach-comber". This has been clearly indicated by the single winter capture heretofore recorded for California (Grinnell, Condor, xii, 1910, p. 174), and by the Oregon experience of Shelton (Condor, xvii, 1915, p. 60), and the Alaskan notes from Admiralty Island given by H. S. Swarth (Condor, xiv, 1912, p. 73). Here, on the contrary, it was found far inland in the characteristic habitat of the host of Townsend Fox Sparrows that were coming in at the time from the north, and in an association quite distinct from that of the beach.

Dr. Joseph Grinnell and Mr. H. S. Swarth have kindly compared the specimen with the birds from more northern stations that are now in their care at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California.—DONALD R. DICKEY, *Pasadena, California, December 22, 1921.*

Rufous Hummingbird Tragedy.—On April 24, 1920, Mrs. Stoner found in the back yard a male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), badly stunned and fluttering on the ground beneath the clothesline, with which no doubt it had collided. The line was one of the continuous wire lines working on a pulley at each end, and quite possibly in trying to avoid one of the wires it flew into the other, some ten or twelve inches above or below. It was taken into the house, but lived only a few minutes. The outer tail feathers measure 3 mm. in width, and the next to middle tail feathers are notched. The skin was preserved. This incident cites a date of the northward migration in this locality, as well as one of the many hazards birds have to contend with.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, December 31, 1921.*

Wintering of the Nuttall Sparrow in Los Angeles County.—Because of the paucity of records of this species from Los Angeles County, California, it may be of interest to note that this sparrow was found to be fairly common in Placerita Canyon, near Newhall, during December, 1920, and January, 1921.

Mr. E. J. Brown and the junior writer spent several odd days collecting in this locality with the following results: December 15, 1920, we took four adult specimens of *Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli* and saw several more at sufficiently close range to make us fairly sure that they were of the same form; December 30, 1920, we took three additional adults and saw what we were confident were two more; January 24, 1921, we took another adult.

All of these birds were either in the typical "song sparrow" cover of a damp willow bottom, or among the blackberry vines of a ranch garden.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, January 13, 1922.*

Kamchatka Sea Eagle at Kodiak, Alaska.—The accompanying photograph is of the Kamchatka Sea Eagle (*Thalassoaetus pelagicus*), which was taken last summer on the island of Kodiak, Alaska, by a party of which I was a member. The capture was made August 10, 1921, at the outlet of a small lake without name, which is tributary to the upper end of Karluk Lake. The photograph was taken from the outlet stream, looking lengthwise of the smaller lake, which is about two miles long.

The bird was shot by a native who formed a member of our party, and who frequently hunts about Karluk Lake. He stated that he had observed this strange eagle



Fig. 28. KAMCHATKA SEA EAGLE CAPTURED ON KODIAK ISLAND, ALASKA, AUGUST 10, 1921.

on a number of previous occasions and had tried to capture it, and that this was the only bird of the kind he had ever seen. Bald Eagles were abundant in this locality.

My few notes state that the head was not white but was covered with feathers variegated much as in the Golden Eagle. The tail and leg feathers were white, as were the entire front edges of the wings. The feet and bill were extremely powerful, obviously larger than in the Bald Eagle, which we had for comparison. Both bill and feet were strikingly bright in color, of a deep golden yellow, which covered also the bare portion of the legs. The tail feathers were graduated.—CHARLES H. GILBERT, *Stanford University, California, January 20, 1922.*

Red Phalarope in Southern California.—At the October meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Club comment was made on the numbers of Red Phalaropes (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) dying on the beach. Several persons reported the birds also inland. On October 25 I saw twelve on a flooded meadow in Los Angeles on South Main Street near Manchester Avenue. At Wilmington tide flats, October 22, several flocks of twelve or more birds each were closely observed for several hours altogether. During the whole day only three or four bodies were found, although one sick bird was picked

up. Two birds shot from tide pools had so much fat I had to scrape the skins, but the others were thin.

Between October 3 and November 28, I visited the flats at San Pedro or the rocks at Point Fermin nine times. At all times when found the birds were actively whirling in pools or flitting and dabbling about on the ocean. Besides those mentioned I have found only a few carcasses.

August 23 and several days thereafter I observed a lone Red Phalarope very closely. When first encountered the bird was making short flights along the beach to dodge a small child who persistently trotted after it from place to place. Finally it took refuge on the water. In a few moments, after preening and resting, it returned and trotted easily and fearlessly before my slow advance, flying only when frightened and then but a rod or so, or out to the water. Kelp flies seemed to satisfy its sporting instincts and hunger, and the bird stalked them slowly and pointedly one by one. With bill and neck outstretched and lowered in line with a fly on the sand, a slow advance was made until with a pounce the hunt closed. If the fly escaped, the phalarope sometimes ran after it, bill out.

Another pose interested me. On finding a kelp mass decaying and drawing flies, the Phalarope approached closely and so low that his breast touched the ground, but the rear of the bird was high up. At times he would remain with breast down and pick at the flies much as a dusting fowl picks up a stray grain. Mr. L. E. Wyman reported similar "breast to ground" actions of two phalaropes he saw feeding by a kelp mass on the beach.

Upon the arrival of the Red Phalaropes, a local paper stated that the harbor was covered with "Mother Cary's Chickens".—ROLAND C. ROSS, *Los Angeles, California, January 2, 1922.*

New Nesting Records of American Osprey in Northern California.—As nesting records of the American Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*) in the northern part of this state are rather rare it was interesting to note two nests during 1921.

One of these was under construction in the top of the tall stump of a dead fir in a cleared flat on the north side of the Klamath River near Requa, Del Norte County, California, on May 18. The birds were seen bringing material for building purposes.

The other record is of an Osprey's nest noted on the South Fork of the Eel River some miles above Garberville, Mendocino County, California.

This nest was noted by Mr. Chester C. Lamb and myself on October 7, 1921, as we were returning from a fall field trip up the coast. It was placed on top of a tall, slim, rather isolated redwood tree standing on the edge of the river, and was in plain sight from the highway, but some half a mile distant therefrom. While no birds were seen, it was unmistakably the nest of an Osprey. My brother, John W. Mailliard, had also noted this nest as he passed by a few days previously.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, January 12, 1922.*

Kern County Notes.—Field work carried on during the last two years in the vicinity of Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, California, has resulted in an extension of the ranges of several birds. Not only has the Suisun Marsh Wren been found breeding about the Lake, but an interesting arm of Mohave influence has been indicated by the presence in the locality of birds that were formerly restricted, in our belief, to the more eastern desert regions.

Telmatodytes palustris aestuarinus: A series of breeding marsh wrens taken in the tules about the shores of Buena Vista Lake were identified by Mr. H. S. Swarth as of this form. This extends the breeding range of this comparatively new race south to include the entire San Joaquin Valley.

Amphispiza nevadensis canescens: In our experience, this species has never before been found in summer save in the *Artemisia* association. Despite the absence of sage about this Lake, however, this is one of the commonest summer birds, adhering closely to the scrubby growth of *Atriplex polycarpa* which covers the hillsides and plains of the region.

Bubo virginianus pallascens: A pair of breeding birds and one juvenile taken by the authors on June 4, 1920, another juvenile taken June 22, 1921, the remains of an

adult bird found by the junior author on September 15, 1921, and a late fall specimen collected by L. M. Huey on October 21, 1919, agree in showing conclusively that the desert race of horned owl is the form found in the extreme southern San Joaquin Valley. Whether *pallescens* has invaded the region in recent years and supplanted *pacificus*, which was formerly supposed to inhabit the section, or whether it has always been an established part of the local avifauna, is a debatable question. But the latter hypothesis seems much the more logical when we consider that this region also supports other typical desert forms, such as the Leconte Thrasher and California Sage Sparrow.

Otocoris alpestris ammophila: The horned larks breeding about Buena Vista Lake exhibit affinities that are distinctly analogous to those which characterize the horned owls of the region, in that they seem related to the form of the Mohave Desert, rather than to *actia* of the more northern portion of the San Joaquin. A series of breeding birds from the vicinity of the Lake do, in a few instances, show a slight tendency in the latter direction, but the great majority are so close to typical *ammophila* as to be referable with certainty to that form. Breeding birds from Corcoran, Kings County, California, in the collection of A. B. Howell, are unqualifiedly *actia*, so that *ammophila*, in the San Joaquin, must be confined to the extreme southern end of the Valley.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, January 13, 1922.*

Position of Feet in Flight in Certain Birds.—Here are several apparent "rules" in bird life that have interested me for some time, and they are passed on to the readers of THE CONDOR for what they are worth.

1. All water birds in flight extend the feet behind.
2. All web-footed birds, with short tails, spread the toes in flight, the membranes apparently acting as an elevator or rudder. This group includes the murre, murrelets, auks, and puffins.
3. All perching birds in flight fold the legs forward under the feathers.

All the short-tailed, web-footed birds that I have had under close observation, when getting under way do spread the toes, placing them side by side to form a wide flat surface, which is no doubt useful in flight. By the time these birds may have attained their regular speed, possibly the toes are relaxed, but they are then as a rule too far distant for accurate observation. I am not so certain that loons follow this rule. Grebes, which are lobe-footed, spread the lobe flat out in rising from the water, and, I think, close the toes after attaining full speed.—GEO. G. CANTWELL, *Puyallup, Washington, January 20, 1922.*

Further Remarks on the Occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake.—We have read with interest Mr. Allan Brooks's comment on our record of the occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake, California. Mr. Ray had received a similar letter from Mr. A. C. Bent drawing his attention particularly to the error in the identification of the young ducks shown in figure 33 of the Condor for November, 1921. It is evident that these are young American Mergansers. We do not wish to take up space unnecessarily in a discussion of this matter, but we believe a further account of the circumstances may be of interest, especially so, as Mr. Brooks has brought up several questions of doubt regarding the identity of the young following the female Buffle-head and also the actions of the male bird.

Mr. Ray and I feel positive that the young following the female are Buffle-heads and we can also vouch for the actions of the male Buffle-head. The error regarding the young ducks shown in figure 33, we believe, should and can be explained by the circumstances leading to their capture. Upon our first encountering the female and eight young, we recognized this as a new breeding duck for this locality and during our efforts to obtain a photograph it was noted that two of the young made several attempts at diving and in this way became separated from the parent. The remaining six kept well up with the parent and seemed to obey each warning. The diving efforts of the two young and the maneuvering of our boat caused a complete separation of the two from the parent and the remainder of the flock.

Several hours afterward, the two young of the photograph were found on the shore of the bay in which the female and young were encountered and not more than 50 yards from the point where the photograph, figure 32, was taken.

As the sizes of the young were apparently the same and no other duck with young was seen in the vicinity, we naturally assumed these were the missing two from the flock. After photographing, we returned these two to the small pond occupied by the female and it was noted that the female immediately began pecking at the two new arrivals. Upon a later observation of the group, we found that the female had only six young, instead of eight, she evidently having driven the two young away from the flock.

At least two explanations are possible regarding the occurrence of these two small young. They may have been separated from their own brood and joined the flock in which we found them, or it is possible Merganser eggs were deposited in the nest of the Buffle-head and hatched. The latter explanation seems the more probable to us on account of the juveniles corresponding in size with the others. It is not uncommon to find eggs of different varieties of ground-nesting ducks in the same nest and, no doubt, the same holds true of tree-nesting varieties as well.

Regarding the occurrence of the male Buffle-head, this bird was flushed from the bay before we were aware of the presence of the female and young. The male returned and was flushed at least twice thereafter from this small bay, and while he showed no particular solicitation for the young, it seemed obvious that he was the parent bird. In any event, he showed a decided preference for the small section of water occupied by the female and young.—JULES LABARTHE, *San Francisco, February 6, 1922.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The award of the Brewster Memorial Medal for 1920-21 has been made by the American Ornithologists' Union to Robert Ridgway in recognition of his successful labors on the "Birds of North and Middle America." Every ornithologist will heartily approve of the decision of the committee in charge of the award, that volume VIII of this great work was the most meritorious publication on the birds of America which appeared during the last two-year period.

On January 17, 1922, in response to an invitation from Mr. Charles L. Whittle, Mr. L. B. Fletcher, and others interested in the banding of birds, over 100 persons met at the Boston Society of Natural History Building in Boston and organized a new ornithological society to be known as the New England Bird Banding Association. The meeting was addressed by Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin, of Cleveland, who during the last six years, by introducing bird-trapping as a means of banding birds, has done so much to show the scientific possibilities of the work. The Bureau of Biological Survey was represented by Mr. E. A. Goldman who spoke of the Bureau's plans in connection with the movement, strongly endorsing the organization of the new association and recommending the formation of other organizations of the same character at appropriate localities in the United States and Canada. Over 300 members are already enrolled in the new organization.

It is becoming increasingly incumbent upon active workers in any field of science to keep up with the times. Each one of us must know the literature appearing in his field. An indispensable aid to every serious

worker is the Zoological Record, published by the Zoological Society of London (Regent's Park). Mr. W. L. Sclater is editor of the "Aves" portion, the annual subscription to which is seven shillings six pence. The publication of the Zoological Record has been continuous throughout the war period, owing to local provision. But now, with greatly increased printing costs, it can be continued on the same plane of completeness only with outside support as well. It is a cooperative enterprise; hence the propriety of this suggestion that each Condor reader who is also a serious student in ornithology contribute to its maintenance by subscribing, at least to the extent intimated above.

The department of zoology of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, has been completely reorganized under the direction of Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, Curator of that department. In the division of birds, Dr. C. E. Hellmayr has been secured as Associate Curator, Mr. John T. Zimmer as Assistant Curator, Mr. Colin Sanborn as Assistant, and Mr. Boardman Conover as Associate. In the division of birds' eggs Mr. R. M. Barnes is Assistant Curator. In the division of mammals Mr. Edmund Heller has been made Assistant Curator. Messrs. Heller and Zimmer are about to leave for an extended period of vertebrate collecting in Peru.

Mr. A. S. Kibbe has recently made some comments in *The Gull* (organ of the Audubon Association of the Pacific) anent bird trapping and banding which to our minds deserve serious consideration. He says: "Trapping is not a diversion nor a spas-